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## Apostle Islands News Release

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### **New Regulation Allows Snowmobile Use on Ice Surrounding Apostle Islands**

Thanks in large measure to strong community support and excellent cooperation from ice fishing enthusiasts, snowmobiles and off-road vehicles (ORVs) may once again be used on the ice – for certain purposes - within the quarter-mile water boundary surrounding each of the islands of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, and near most of the park’s mainland unit. Snowmobiles or ORVs will be permitted if they are used to provide access for ice fishing or other legal non-motorized activities. The new rule will also allow the use of power ice augers and saws in the same areas. Recreational touring on the ice and all forms of snowmobile or ORV use on the islands themselves will continue to be prohibited, as it has been for decades.

Recent lawsuits and court rulings involving the National Park Service (NPS) led to a rather confused situation regarding the use of snowmobiles and off-road vehicles on the frozen surfaces of Lake Superior in the winter of 2003-2004. The vehicles, which had always been prohibited on most of the park’s land surfaces, were legal on the ice within the park prior to the mid-1980s. But national regulations changed at that time, and now their use can be legal only if the NPS develops a special regulation specific to Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. That process has just been completed.

“We anticipate that the special regulation will be published in the Federal Register on Friday, April 1, and will go into effect on that day,” said Apostle Islands National Lakeshore superintendent Bob Krumenaker. “And no, this is not an April Fools joke. Our visitors and local communities told us they felt very strongly about this, and we have all expended a lot of time and energy into seeing this process through to completion, far ahead of its original schedule.”

Snowmobiles and ORVs will not be allowed on the frozen surface of Lake Superior off the park's mainland unit from its western boundary near Meyers Beach to Sand Point. This short stretch is heavily used by skiers and snowshoers who flock to the area when ice conditions permit to view the increasingly popular ice caves. Everywhere else in the park, ice fishing is by far the most popular activity taking place during the winter months.

The NPS urges the public to exercise extreme caution when traveling on the frozen surface of Lake Superior. The ice is often rough and conditions can go from safe to dangerous without notice, particularly at this time of year. National regulations continue to prevent the use of jet skis and float planes within the boundaries of the park. Park staff presume that this will remain the case indefinitely. As had been the case with snowmobiles and ORVs, this applies only to waters within the park's quarter-mile boundary.

"Community leaders and local sportsmen played a huge role in helping us achieve this," says Krumenaker. "We're thrilled that the regulation has been approved, but even more pleased with the positive relationships that have been forged by the effort. Our sincerest thanks are extended to all who participated."

Copies of the new regulation and maps showing where it applies will soon be available at the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore website at [www.nps.gov/apis/parkhq.htm](http://www.nps.gov/apis/parkhq.htm) under Management Documents. Questions about the regulation, or other park regulations, may be directed to the park's Chief of Protection, Greg Zeman, at 715-779-3398, extension 201.

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